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CELTIC SUPERSTITION.

DESPITE the existence of a Society for the collection of well-authenticated ghost-stories, dreams, omens, and such like, it is little better than a commonplace to remark that the age of superstition is for Europe well-nigh past. Doubtless, in remote nooks there yet linger fragments of eerie tradition; the fortune-teller yet meets with a credulous maid, or an isolated instance of revenge for supposed bewitchment or effects of the evil-eye may be recorded; but the educated mass of the people simply smile at or bewail such antiquated belief. No phantom dare remain to alarm and perplex the era of electricity. It is with races and nations as with man in the particular: in their early childhood there is a wondering awe of nature and her forces; the wind and the sea, the river and the waterfall, are either superior beings to be revered and worshipped in themselves, or they are the haunts of spirits and of gods. As for the children, of certain races, there exist fairies and gnomes; the world is inhabited by numberless denizens other than mortal; everything is regarded with strange amazement. These beliefs are doubtless affected by the surroundings and nature of the people. The character and the superstitions of the Saxons, for example, harmonise thoroughly; a savage, war-like race, mighty and pure, the product of the stern North. And so in the ancient legends we are told how, in the beginning, all sprang from two regions—Nifheim, the frozen, and Muspell, the burning. Into the chaotic chasm the giant Ymir, the frozen Ocean, is born; his children the whirlwinds and the barren mountains are the foes of the life-giving Sun. He is slain, and the earth is formed from his flesh. Then succeeds war between 'the monsters of winter and the luminous fertile gods.' It is all a personification of the tremendous struggle of man in those dreary northern regions against the elements. There follows a time of fairy tales, the time when deeds of heroic romance are performed, when such

legends as the Arthurian and Fingalian have their birth, and 'all the land is filled full of faerie.'

These particular legends are the vague and dim expression of some mysterious conflict, at the origin of which and of the combatants we can but guess. But for the British people, the wonderland of childhood has long been left behind; spirits no longer haunt the streams and the meres; the dryads were banished centuries ago from their forest homes in the sunny south; the fairies fled at the sound of the steam-whistle; the pixies of Cornwall died with the old speech. Only in the mountain fastnesses of Scotland and Wales, and in the forlorn isles set 'far amid the melancholy main,' does a general acceptance of belief in the unseen appear at all possible.

It is a truism that the race which is brought into most direct contact with the mighty agencies of nature is more superstitious than that which inhabits a fertile and populous region. The least imaginative dweller in a great city probably feels something akin to awe in the solitude of the mountains or out on the vast ocean by night, with the dome of the throbbing sky above, and the heaving and tumbling waters beneath. Or passing through the pine-woods of Culloden in the gathering gloom, he might find come upon him with strange vividness and force the old Celtic belief—the belief which Ossian chanted in his lonely despair—that the souls of the heroes are abroad on the breeze that murmurs in the gloaming athwart the field where they fell. And so it is that fisher-folk and Highlanders were ever the most superstitious of human beings. Now that the phantoms are fleeing before the standards of the School Board, it is in those parts of the Highlands furthest removed from contact with the new order of things that the richest field lies open for inquiring into old-world legends and credulities. Those lonely isles amid which the tourist sails during his summer voyage on the western coast of Scotland are inhabited by a race as far apart from

his own as twilight is from the glare of noon-day. Familiarity with nature in her wildest moods never breeds contempt. Something of the desolation of the isles has entered into the islanders. There broods a silence there that is at first awful, broken only by the scream of the seabird. The sadness that envelops them like the mist on the hills is reflected in the pathos of the songs, such as that of *Macleod of Dunvegan*! or in laments like that of *M'Crimmin*; it is present in the faces of the natives. The maidens croon ballads as old as Ossian, and as pathetic as his story. The tales that are told in the bothies around the peat-fires are of lights dancing on the waves where the boat is to go down; of shrouds appearing in the moonlight; of second-sight; of fairies and ghostly pipings; of water-snakes and kelpies. 'The dreamy grief of the gray sea' has entered into their nature. Yet the Celt fears death less than most. He has thought so much of it, that it has lost its terrors for him. It is a common salutation to wish one a decorous and peaceful departure, instead of the good health which in the Lowlands and the south country is the expression of courteous interest.

A tale of the supernatural loses or gains by its surroundings. That which is regarded as a jest in a brilliantly lit London drawing-room, becomes something very different when recapitulated in a thatched cottage by one for whom every word of the narration is as true as his New Testament. The glow from the peat-fire in the middle of the floor only serves to make the shadows lurk more dusky in the corners; the winds are raging without; a drop of rain is blown now and again upon the window. Nature wears her most awe-inspiring aspect in the Hebridean Isles. The mists drift in strange shapes along the hillsides, rifting and gathering capriciously, now revealing a yawning chasm, now hiding the torrent that roars from the linn. Mile upon mile of dreary moorland stretches away, untrodden by human foot, or without trace of human presence, save where a cairn tells of 'far-off old unhappy things and battles long ago.' The seas are as awe-inspiring as the isles. Between the islands of Scarba and Jura, boils and roars the Atlantic maelstrom—the whirlpool of Corryvreckin. Many a gruesome legend hangs over it, dating from the day when the Scandinavian Prince wagered to sail across, and was whirled round and round, then went down into the depths. Can there be any cause for astonishment at the superstition of the Gael? 'The Celt is the most melancholy of men; he has turned everything to supernatural uses, and every object of nature, even the unreasoning dreams of sleep, are mirrors which flash back death upon him. He, the least of all men requires the reminder that he is mortal. The howling of his dog will do him that service.' So wrote one who studied long and lovingly the Celtic character, and to whom the Isle of Mist was very dear.

The melancholy and superstition of the Celtic race may be due in part to the unsuccessful struggle which it has maintained against the advance of a slowly but surely conquering power. Speech, custom, the race itself is being slowly overcome; soon in its separate and distinct form it will have passed for ever. But incorporated with the other elements which go to make up the British people, its influence, ennobling and refining, will last with the English.

There is a similarity in the superstitions of all times and countries. The legend of *Fraoch Eilan* in Loch Awe, of the golden apples guarded by a dragon, is but the story of the fair *Hesperides* over again. It is curious also to note that the powers ascribed by *Adamnan* to *St Columba*, in his biography of the missionary of Iona, coincide with those attributed to witches, seers, and other intermediaries between the visible and the invisible in the Highlands. The Gaelic woman who divines the success of a mission by the direction which the smoke takes in issuing from the chimney of her cottage, is simply following the example of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The custom of opening the Bible at random to guide one in an enterprise or deliberation is but a repetition of the *sortes Virgilianæ*.

Gael and Cymri alike had intercourse with the fairies, whom they called by any other name than their own; hence the designation of 'the men of peace,' 'the hunters in green,' 'the good people,' &c. The fairies of the Highlands were not by any means the fairies of Shakespeare. There is little affinity with the revellers in the wood near Athens on midsummer night. Rather they were represented as a discontented and fretful folk, easily offended, delighted when opportunity afforded to annoy mortals, whom they seem to regard with envy and hate. On Friday, the Celt's aversion to naming them was increased tenfold, for on that day their powers are greatly augmented. To wear their favourite colour, green, was an unpardonable insult. Rites of a complex nature were gone through to protect the unbaptised infant and its mother from their clutches. Even as *True Thomas* of *Ercildoune* was spirited away to fairyland, so *Ossian* falling asleep on a *shian* (green fairy knoll) is kept a prisoner there for twenty years. One of our oldest ballads—as it chances, a Lowland production—tells of the rescue of *Tamlane* from his fairy captors. A certain minister of *Balquhider* was less fortunate, for, if legend is to be credited, he remains still in the halls of his enemies, notwithstanding that an opportunity for obtaining his release was presented. Did space permit, hundreds of similar tales might be recounted. The flag of wondrous virtue which is kept in the castle of *Dunvegan* on the coast of *Skye* was given to *Macleod* by the fairy whom he courted on the green braes by the sea, and whose story is similar to that of the mermaid, whom, on moonlight nights, the sailors still hear crooning sad laments on *Colonsay*. A Gaelic poem, one of many on kindred themes, tells how a maiden—a milkmaid—met in secret with the Hunter in Green. But on going to confession on the eve of *St Agnes*, she revealed her love, and received from her ghostly adviser instructions to slip under her lover's vest a cross that *St Columba* had blessed. She did so; and lo! instead of the Hunter in

Green, there was only 'a brown withered twig, so elf-twisted and dry.'

The urisks were a sort of intermediary race between spirits and mortals, and acted the part ascribed to the brownies of England and of Lowland Scotland. If kindly treated, they might render service to the family to which they had joined themselves. Often the guidwife found her kitchen put to rights, and the fire blazing cheerily when she awoke. But unkindness drove them away at once. A tale is told of an urisk whose customary bowl of milk was one morning forgotten, and who fled with a wild shriek never to return.

The urisks are not to be confounded with the ghostly retainers who guard the fortunes of many an old Scottish family. The phantom drummer of the Bonnie House o' Airlie, beating his blood-curdling roll, is well known. Like old castles and mansions everywhere, those of the north country are mostly haunted. A spirit lingers in deserted Duntulm, for instance. The McDonalds dwelt there till the ghost of Donald Gorm drove them out. While yet his body lay in Edinburgh, his ghost wandered through Duntulm. Unearthly voices re-echoed along the passages, shadowy tartans waved, there were heard wailing and moaning. A rash youth dared to 'beard the lion in his den' with the aid of sword and Bible; but in vain, and so the eerie ruin crumbles away. The Highlanders are indeed constantly receiving messages from the unseen. Thus, it has been revealed to them that another conflict will be fought on dark Drummossie Moor; for often, while crossing it in the gloaming of a summer evening, has the Gael found himself in the midst of the smoke of battle. He has seen the tartans waving, he has seen the broadswords flashing, and though he cannot explain the reason, he still believes that his vision is prophetic.

But a hundred little incidents which by others would pass unheeded are for him fraught with the most solemn meaning. The cock which crows at midnight conveys the intelligence of a death in the neighbourhood. Itching of the nose or ringing in the ears bears the same message. If his cattle die, the evil-eye has gazed upon them. The boat that drifts empty out to sea has been pushed from its moorings by the fairies. Deeply confident in these beliefs is the Gael.

More even than in the Highlands of Scotland, is the influence of the age felt in Wales. 'They're changing everything nowadays, aren't they, sir?' was the remark addressed to the writer by an old Welsh woman in the oldest of churchyards in the oldest and quaintest of walled cities. The nineteenth and the thirteenth centuries come very close together in Conway. The train dashing out through the tube and under the walls of the castle is the spirit of utilitarianism; the mouldering towers and battlements of the mighty castle of Edward I. and Eleanor his queen embody the ancient chivalry. The sound of the old woman's words rings on like the voice of a passing bell; and as it tolls, lo! the stately dames and gallant knights pass out through the arched gateways into the mist, and return never more; the castle waxes old and crumbles; the navy comes with his pick and undermines it; snorting fire, a shrieking monster dashes up—as he comes, all the old beliefs, all the simple

manners and customs, fly disgusted into the mountains, there to linger.

But among the hills there are wondrous legends floating about: the nineteenth century has receded into the dim vagueness of a dream. Merlin chanting his incantations; Llywarch Hen singing sad dirges for Gwenn; Taliesin, the chief of bards: these are nearer you there. In the Cardigan mines, the knockers are still heard, indicating where a rich lode may be expected. It is yet believed that if you cut a turf from St David's and stand upon it, you will see the Islands of the Blessed. The stones of Helog-ab-Cunog have their weird story; many a cottage in the lonely uplands is haunted. Witches were consulted and believed in so lately as 1826. The Cymri of Wales have their giant too, the good Foulkes Ty Du, who is always helping them. When evil, on the other hand, is about to overtake them, the Tybiath (=German *Ahnung*) or presentiment forebodes it. No singer can be a true bard unless the divine *Awen* has descended upon him. Cader Idris is famous for its inspiring influence. Legend has it that to sleep upon its summit makes a man a poet or a madman.

We cannot better conclude than in the words of one of Mary Howitt's Welsh heroines: 'I believe that there are two great realms in nature, the outward and the inward, the one being as real as the other. Science can and does penetrate the one, the outward, and will in time lay bare all its mysteries; but at present—whatever science or even intellect may do in time to come—they now lead away from and are antagonistic to the inward, which is the realm of spiritual life. We Welsh people, like all primitive and simple nations, as yet retain our hold upon the realm of spirit; it has not quite gone from us yet, and there are many living amongst us to whom more or less of the inward, the spiritual, is revealed.'

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FRANCES had not succeeded in resolving this question in her mind when Thursday came. The two intervening days had been very quiet. She had gone with her mother to several shops, and had stood by almost passive and much astonished while a multitude of little luxuries which she had never been sufficiently enlightened even to wish for, were bought for her. She was so little accustomed to lavish expenditure, that it was almost with a sense of wrong-doing that she contemplated all these costly trifles, which were for the use not of some typical fine lady, but of herself, Frances, who had never thought it possible she could ever be classed under that title. To Lady Markham, these delicacies were evidently necessities of life. And then it was for the first time that Frances learned what an evening dress meant—not only the garment itself, but the shoes, the stockings, the gloves, the ribbons, the fan, a hundred little accessories which she had never so much as thought of. When you have nothing but a set of coral or amber beads to wear with your white frock, it is astonishing how much that matter is simplified. Lady Markham opened her jewel-boxes to provide for the same endless

roll of necessities. 'This will go with the white dress, and this with the pink,' she said, thus revealing to Frances another delicacy of accord unsuspected by her simplicity.

'But, mamma, you are giving me so many things!'

'Not your share yet,' said Lady Markham. And she added: 'But don't say anything of this to your aunt Cavendish. She will probably give you something out of her hoards, if she thinks you are not provided.'

This speech checked the pleasure and gratitude of Frances. She stopped with a little gasp in her eager thanks. She wanted nothing from her aunt Cavendish, she said to herself with indignation, nor from her mother either. If they would but let her keep her ignorance, her pleasure in any simple gift, and not represent her, even to herself, as a little schemer, trying how much she could get. Frances cried rather than smiled over her pearls and the set of old gold ornaments, which but for that little speech would have made her happy. The suggestion put gall into everything, and made the timid question in her mind as to Lady Markham's generous forbearance with her sister-in-law, more difficult than ever. Why did she bear it? She ought not to have borne it—not for a day.

On the Wednesday evening before the visit to Portland Place, to which she looked with so much alarm, two gentlemen came to dinner at the invitation of Markham. The idea of two gentlemen to dinner produced no exciting effect upon Frances so as to withdraw her mind from the trial that was coming. Gentlemen were the only portion of the creation with which she was more or less acquainted. Even in the old Palazzo, a guest of this description had been occasionally received, and had sat discussing some point of antiquarian lore or something about the old books at Colla, with her father without taking any notice, beyond what civility demanded, of the little girl who sat at the head of the table. She did not doubt it would be the same thing to-night; and though Markham was always *nice*, never leaving her out, never letting the conversation drop altogether into that stream of personality or allusion which makes Society so intolerable to a stranger, she yet prepared for the evening with the feeling that dullness awaited her, and not pleasure. One of the guests, however, was of a kind which Frances did not expect. He was young, very young in appearance, rather small and delicate, but at the same time refined, with a look of gentle melancholy upon a countenance which was almost beautiful, with child-like limpid eyes, and features of extreme delicacy and purity. This was something quite unlike the elderly antiquarians who talked so glibly to her father about Roman remains or Etruscan art. He sat between Lady Markham and herself, and spoke in gentle tones, with a soft affectionate manner, to her mother, who replied with the kindness, easy affectionateness, which were habitual to her. To see the sweet looks which this young gentleman received, and to hear the tender questions about his health and his occupations which Lady Markham put to him, awoke in the mind of Frances another doubt of the same character as those from which she had not been able to get free. Was this

sympathetic tone, this air of tender interest, put on at will for the benefit of everybody with whom Lady Markham spoke? Frances hated herself for the instinctive question which rose in her, and for the suspicions which crept into her mind on every side and undermined all her pleasure. The other stranger opposite to her was old—to her youthful eyes—and called forth no interest at all. But the gentleness and melancholy, the low voice, the delicate features, something plaintive and appealing about the youth by her side, attracted her interest in spite of herself. He said little to her, but from time to time she caught him looking at her with a sort of questioning glance. When the ladies left the table, and Frances and her mother were alone in the drawing-room, Lady Markham, who had said nothing for some minutes, suddenly turned and asked: 'What did you think of him, Frances?' as if it were the most natural question in the world.

'Of whom?' said Frances in her astonishment.

'Of Claude, my dear. Whom else? Sir Thomas could be of no particular interest either to you or me.'

'I did not know their names, mamma; I scarcely heard them. Claude is the young gentleman who sat next to you?'

'And to you also, Frances. But not only that. He is the man of whom, I suppose, Constance has told you—to avoid whom, she left home, and ran away from me.—Oh, the words come quite appropriate, though I could not bear them from the mouth of Charlotte Cavendish. She abandoned me, and threw herself upon your father's protection, because of'—

Frances had listened with a sort of consternation. When her mother paused for breath, she filled up the interval: 'That little, gentle, small, young man!'

Lady Markham looked for a moment as if she would be angry; then she took a better way, and laughed. 'He is little and young,' she said; 'but neither so young nor even so small as you think. He is most wonderfully, portentously rich, my dear; and he is very nice and good and intelligent and generous. You must not take up a prejudice against him because he is not an athlete or a giant. There are plenty of athletes in Society, my love, but very, very few with a hundred thousand a year.'

'It is so strange to me to hear about money,' said Frances. 'I hope you will pardon me, mamma. I don't understand. I thought he was perhaps some one who was delicate, whose mother, perhaps, you knew, whom you wanted to be kind to.'

'Quite true,' said Lady Markham, patting her daughter's cheek with a soft finger; 'and well judged: but something more besides. I thought, I allow, that it would be an excellent match for Constance; not only because he was rich, but *also* because he was rich.—Do you see the difference?'

'I—suppose so,' Frances said; but there was not any warmth in the admission. 'I thought the right way,' she added after a moment, with a blush that stole over her from head to foot, 'was that people fell in love with each other.'

'So it is,' said her mother, smiling upon her. 'But it often happens, you know, that they fall in love respectively with the wrong people.'

'It is dreadful to me to talk to you, who know so much better,' cried Frances. 'All that I know is from stories. But I thought that even a wrong person, whom you chose yourself, was better than'—

'The right person chosen by your mother? These are awful doctrines, Frances. You are a little revolutionary. Who taught you such terrible things?' Lady Markham laughed as she spoke, and patted the girl's cheek more affectionately than ever, and looked at her with unclouded smiles, so that Frances took courage. 'But,' the mother went on, 'there was no question of choice on my part. Constance has known Claude Ramsay all her life. She liked him, so far as I knew. I supposed she had accepted him. It was not formally announced, I am happy to say; but I made sure of it, and so did everybody else—including himself, poor fellow—when, suddenly, without any warning, your sister disappeared.—It was unkind to me, Frances; oh, it was unkind to me!'

And suddenly, while she was speaking, two tears appeared all at once in Lady Markham's eyes.

Frances was deeply touched by this sight. She ventured upon a caress, which as yet, except in timid return to those bestowed upon her, she had not been bold enough to do. 'I do not think Constance can have meant to be unkind,' she said.

'Few people mean to be unkind,' said this social philosopher, who knew so much more than Frances. 'Your aunt Cavendish does, and that makes her harmless, because one understands. Most of those who wound one, do it because it pleases themselves, without meaning anything—or caring anything—don't you see?—whether it hurts or not.'

This was too profound a saying to be understood at the first moment; but Frances had no reply to make to it. She said only by way of apology: 'But Markham approved?'

'My love,' said her mother, 'Markham is an excellent son to me. He rarely wounds me himself—which is perhaps because he rarely does anything particular himself—but he is not always a safe guide. It makes me very happy to see that you take to him, though you must have heard many things against him; but he is not a safe guide.—Hush; here are the men coming up-stairs. If Claude talks to you, be as gentle with him as you can—and sympathetic, if you can,' she said quickly, rising from her chair, and moving in her noiseless easy way to the other side. Frances felt as if there was a meaning even in this movement, which left herself alone with a vacant seat beside her; but she was confused as usual by all the novelty, and did not understand what the meaning was.

It was balked, however, if it had anything to do with Mr Ramsay, for it was the other gentleman—the old gentleman, as Frances called him in her thoughts—who came up and took the vacant place. The old gentleman was a man about forty, with a few gray hairs among the brown, and a well-knit manly figure, which showed very well between the delicate youth on one hand and Markham's insignificance on the other. He was Sir Thomas, whom Lady Markham had declared to be of no particular interest to any one; but he evidently

had sense enough to see the charm of simplicity and youth. The attention of Frances was sadly distracted by the movements of Claude, who fidgeted about from one table to another, looking at the books and the nicknacks upon them, and staring at the pictures on the walls, then finally came and stood by Markham's side in front of the fire. He did well to contrast himself with Markham. He was taller, and the beauty of his countenance showed still more strikingly in contrast with Markham's odd little wrinkled face. Frances was distracted by the look which he kept fixed upon herself, and which diverted her attention in spite of herself away from the talk of Sir Thomas, who was, however, very nice, and she felt sure, most interesting and instructive, as became his advanced age, if only she could attend to what he was saying. But what with the lively talk which her mother carried on with Markham, and to which she could not help listening all through the conversation of Sir Thomas, and the movements and glances of the melancholy young lover, she could not fix her mind upon the remarks that were addressed to her own ear. When Claude began to join languidly in the other talk, it was more difficult still. 'You have got a new picture, Lady Markham,' she heard him say; and a sudden quickening of her attention and another wave of colour and heat passing over her, arrested even Sir Thomas in the much more interesting observation which presumably he was about to make. He paused, as if he, too, wanted to hear Lady Markham's reply.

'Shall we call it a picture? It is my little girl's sketch from her window where she has been living—her present to her mother; and I think it is delightful, though in the circumstances I don't pretend to be a judge.'

Where she has been living!—Frances grew redder and hotter in the flush of indignation that went over her. But she could not stand up and proclaim that it was from her home, her dear loggia, the place she loved best in the world, that the sketch was made. Already the bonds of another life were upon her, and she dared not do that. And then there was a little chorus of praise, which silenced her still more effectually. It was the group of palms which she had been so simply proud of, which—as she had never forgotten—had made her father say that she had grown up. Lady Markham had placed it on a small easel on her table; and Frances could not help feeling that this was less for any pleasure it gave her mother, than in order to make a little exhibition of her own powers. It was, to be sure, in her own honour that this was done, and what so natural as that the mother should seek to do her daughter honour? but Frances was deeply sensitive, and painfully conscious of the strange tangled web of motives, which she had never in her life known anything about before. Had the little picture been hung in her mother's bedroom, and seen by no eyes but her own, the girl would have found the most perfect pleasure in it; but here, exhibited as in a public gallery, examined by admiring eyes, calling forth all the incense of praise, it was with a mixture of shame and resentment that Frances found it out. It produced this result, however, that Sir Thomas

rose, as in duty bound, to examine the performance of the daughter of the house; and presently young Ramsay, who had been watching his opportunity, took the place by her side.

'I have been waiting for this,' he said with his air of pathos. 'I have so many things to ask you, if you will let me, Miss Waring.'

'Surely,' Frances said.

'Your sketch is very sweet—it is full of feeling—there is no colour like that of the Riviera. It is the Riviera, is it not?'

'O yes,' cried Frances, eager to seize the opportunity of making it apparent that it was not only where she had been living, as her mother said. 'It is from Bordighera, from our loggia, where I have lived all my life.'

'You will find no colour and no vegetation like that, in London,' the young man said.

To this Frances replied politely that London was full of much more wonderful things, as she had always heard; but felt somewhat disappointed, supposing that his communications to her were to be more interesting than this.

'And the climate is so very different,' he continued. 'I am very often sent out of England for the winter, though this year they have let me stay. I have been at Nice two seasons. I suppose you know Nice? It is a very pretty place; but the wind is just as cold sometimes as at home. You have to keep in the sun; and if you always keep in the sun, it is warm here.'

'But there is not always sun here,' said Frances.

'That is very true; that is a very clever remark. There is not always sun here. San Remo was beginning to be known, when I was there; but I never heard of Bordighera as a place where people went to stay. Some Italian wrote a book about it, I have heard—to push it, no doubt. Could you recommend it as a winter-place, Miss Waring? I suppose it is very dull, nothing going on?'

'Oh, nothing at all,' cried Frances eagerly. 'All the tourists complain that there is nothing to do.'

'I thought so,' he said; 'a regular little Italian dead-alive place.' Then he added after a moment's pause: 'But of course there are inducements which might make one put up with that, if the air happened to suit one. Are there villas to be had, can you tell me? They say, as a matter of fact, that you get more advantage of the air when you are in a dull place.'

'There are hotels,' said Frances, more and more disappointed, though the beginning of this speech had given her a little hope.

'Good hotels?' he said with interest. 'Sometimes they are really better than a place of one's own, where the drainage is often bad, and the exposure not all that could be desired. And then you get any amusement that may be going. Perhaps you will tell me the names of one or two? for if this east wind continues, my doctors may send me off even now.'

Frances looked into his limpid eyes and expressive countenance with dismay. He must look, she felt sure, as if he were making the most touching confidences to her. His soft pathetic voice gave a *faux air* of something sentimental

to those questions, which even she could not persuade herself meant nothing. Was it to show that he was bent upon following Constance wherever she might go? That must be the true meaning, she supposed. He must be endeavouring by this mock-anxiety to find out how much she knew of his real motives, and whether he might trust to her or not. But Frances resented a little the unnecessary precaution.

'I don't know anything about the hotels,' she said. 'I have never thought of the air. It is my home—that is all.'

'You look so well, that I am the more convinced it would be a good place for me,' said the young man. 'You look in such thorough good health, if you will allow me to say so. Some ladies don't like to be told that; but I think it the most delightful thing in existence. Tell me, had you any trouble with drainage, when you went to settle there? And is the water good? and how long does the season last? I am afraid I am teasing you with my questions; but all these details are so important—and one is so pleased to hear of a new place.'

'We live up in the old town,' said Frances with a sudden flash of malice. 'I don't know what drainage is, and neither does any one else there. We have our well in the court—our own well. And I don't think there is any season. We go up among the mountains, when it gets too hot.'

'Your well in the court!' said the sentimental Claude, with the look of a poet who has just been told that his dearest friend is killed by an accident, 'with everything percolating into it! That is terrible indeed.—But,' he said, after a pause, an ethereal sense of consolation stealing over his fine features—there are exceptions, they say, to every rule; and sometimes, with fine health such as you have, bad sanitary conditions do not seem to tell—when there has been no stirring-up. I believe that is at the root of the whole question. People can go on, on the old system, so long as there is no stirring-up; but when once a beginning has been made, it must be complete, or it is fatal.'

He said this with animation much greater than he had shown as yet; then dropping into his habitual pathos: 'If I come in for tea to-morrow—Lady Markham allows me to do it, when I can, when the weather is fit for going out: will you be so very kind as to give me half an hour, Miss Waring, for a few particulars? I will take them down from your lips—it is so much the most satisfactory way; and perhaps you would add to your kindness by just thinking it over beforehand—if there is anything I ought to know.'

'But I am going out to-morrow, Mr Ramsay.'

'Then after to-morrow,' he said; and rising with a bow full of tender deference, went up to Lady Markham to bid her good-night. 'I have been having a most interesting conversation with Miss Waring. She has given me so many *renseignements*,' he said. 'She permits me to come after to-morrow for further particulars.—Dear Lady Markham, good-night and *à revoir*.'

'What was Claude saying to you, Frances?' Lady Markham asked with a little anxiety, when everybody save Markham was gone, and they were alone.

'He asked me about Bordighera, mamma.'
'Poor dear boy! About Con, and what she had said of him? He has a faithful heart, though people think him a little too much taken up with himself.'

'He did not say anything about Constance. He asked about the climate and the drains—what are drains?—and if the water was good, and what hotel I could recommend.'

Lady Markham laughed and coloured slightly, and tapped Frances on the cheek. 'You are a little satirical!—Dear Claude! he is very anxious about his health. But don't you see,' she added, 'that was all a covert way of finding out about Con? He wants to go after her; but he does not want to let everybody in the world see that he has gone after a girl who would not have him. I have a great deal of sympathy with him, for my part.'

Frances had no sympathy with him. She felt, on the other hand, more sympathy for Constance than had moved her yet. To escape from such a lover, Frances thought a girl might be justified in flying to the end of the world. But it never entered into her mind that any like danger to herself was to be thought of. She dismissed Claude Ramsay from her thoughts with half resentment, half amusement, wondering that Constance had not told her more; but feeling, as no such image had ever risen on her horizon before, that she would not have believed Constance. However, her sister had happily escaped, and to herself, Claude Ramsay was nothing. Far more important was it to think of the ordeal of to-morrow. She shivered a little even in her warm room as she anticipated it. England seemed to be colder, grayer, more devoid of brightness in Portland Place than in Eaton Square.

HERBS AND SOME OF THEIR USES.

BY AN OLD-FASHIONED HOUSEWIFE.

WHEN I am busy with my herbs, I often think of the pretty name which was told me by a friend as a Polish title for the sweet old-world work of the herbalist, 'La Pharmacie du Ciel.' It is a pretty and appropriate description of the fragrant science. In olden days, when every great house had its 'still-room,' it was one of the principal occupations of the good 'huswife' to make remedies of all sorts, and for every ill, from herbs and flowers; and the ladies of those days were also clever in searching for the plants required in their useful work, and in gathering the rose-leaves and elder-flowers and other blossoms for making decoctions in the 'still.' I think that there are many who would take a double delight in their garden, and a keener interest in their country walks, if they knew some of the properties of the plants they see, and how to use them; indeed, the whole occupation, from the first search for the herbs to the final bottling and potting of one's various compounds, is so engrossing, that it needs no excuse in bringing the subject before my readers.

Oh, the delight of an afternoon spent, with one's basket and knife as sole companions, in a search for some precious plant—the all-pervading

sweet scent of bank and grove and tangled hedge! Not only the flowers seem sweet, but there is a strange fragrance in the very leaves as they unfold their tender sheaths; and from each red earthy bank, even where the green things will not grow under the thick beech-trees, there is sweetness; and there is over all in nature such a continual whisper of life, and promise of growth and beauty still to come, that the silent woods become at last like enchanted ground to those who will yield themselves to this sweet communion with nature.

I am not going to teach the art of making the strong potions and 'sovereign waters' that played such a large part in the household physics of two or more centuries ago; but am merely going to describe how to make simple things for external application, which may be safely used.

Any plant that is to be used should be gathered before its flowers expand, as then it possesses its qualities in the strongest degree. Flowers should be gathered the day they open, and, like leaves or herbs, should be plucked in the early morning, just as the dew dries off, and before the rays of the sun have had time to extract any of the virtues. From seven to nine is the best time for herb or flower gathering. Each fair pharmacist should provide herself with a basket, scissors, a good apron, one or two good-sized china bowls, some spatulas, and above all, some of those useful tin saucepans fitted with earthenware pots inside. They are the safest and best vehicle for heating oil or wax, and I never knew any accident happen when using them.

The first preparation I should like you to learn to make is called *Hypericum* oil and ointment. It is made from one of the numerous family of St John's wort. It is a difficult matter to identify the right flower until one becomes thoroughly acquainted with it, as there is another plant of the genus which flowers at the same time, and is generally found growing in the same locality, and is in many points similar to the one we require. The *Hypericum perforatum* is generally found growing on some tangled hedge-bank, a tall graceful plant, with its bright, starry-yellow blossoms peeping out from amongst the luxuriant growth of long grass and brambles. Pick off first a leaf. If it is the right plant, you will find, if you hold it against the light, that it is full of little holes, as if it had been pricked with a pin. To make assurance doubly sure, take one of the golden flowers and squeeze it with your fingers; the right sort will leave a deep purple stain. Pick as many blossoms as you can, for they are only to be got in July and August. The flowers should at once be put in a large open-mouthed bottle, and the best salad oil poured on them until they are covered. A bladder-skin should then be tied over the mouth of the bottle, which must be placed so that the rays of the sun will fall upon it until the oil becomes of a rich red colour. This does not generally take place until about December. If by that time the oil is not sufficiently coloured, place the bottle for a time by a fire. The oil should then be strained from the blossoms, and is fit for use. It is invaluable as a preventive of bedsores, and even for healing wounds. It should be applied with a feather.

In some cases, it is easier and preferable to

use an ointment made of the same, which should be made thus: Melt together in the little earthenware pot I have mentioned, two drachms of finely shred spermaceti; four drachms white wax; three and a half ounces of the red oil. When thoroughly melted, place the pot in a vessel of cold water, and stir with a spatula till it becomes cold. The ointment can then be put in pots for use.

A charming preparation to make is 'Bellis,' as a remedy for sprains, bruises, and contusions. The first blossoms of the common daisy should be picked. Probably in early summer we should get the most abundant supply. Pound the blossoms in a mortar until they are reduced to a mass of a yellowish-green colour, which mass must then be squeezed in muslin until the juice is extracted. Put this in a clear bottle, and add to it one-third of best spirits of wine. But if, after standing for a few hours, it is perceived that the sediment rises to the surface instead of sinking to the bottom, the quantity of spirits of wine must be increased. It is usually better to allow the bottle of the mixture to stand for some months with the sediment, as that adds considerably to the strength of the lotion. Before application, however, the Bellis should be strained off, and will remain of a clear brown colour. A linen rag steeped in the lotion and applied to the part affected, is the usual mode of application; or if it is preferred, the Bellis may be rubbed in. This lotion has many of the virtues of arnica, without the danger which in some cases accompanies the use of that plant.

We often find slight burns or scalds that demand a cooling application which can be made and used without delay. On many old roofs and walls in the country you will find growing large plants of the green fleshy-leaved stonecrop (*Sempervivum tectorum*). Take a handful of these; beat in a mortar; add a tablespoonful of cream; and if you have a coarse sieve, pass the mixture through it. Lay a thick covering of the soft cool mass on the hurt part; bind on gently, but carefully, with a bandage of linen. This quickly lessens the pain and abates inflammation.

The various 'green ointments' which were much in vogue at one time are many of them very cooling and healing. I will describe one which I have found very useful in many forms of cutaneous diseases. Take a handful of fresh groundsel, and the same of chickweed (*Stellaria media*), just as they are on the point of flowering; place these in a large iron saucepan with about four tablespoonfuls of best fresh lard. Stir and squeeze the juicy stalks with a wooden spoon into the lard as it gradually melts. When it is all dissolved, let the pan stand in a safe warm place for a couple of hours; then turn the mass into a coarse cloth, and squeeze quickly and carefully the green liquid ointment into a basin. This must be stirred a little as it cools, to prevent its getting too hard.

A useful ointment for external bruises may be made of the wild Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum*). This plant is not common; but you will find it sometimes growing in rather damp shady hedgesides, about eighteen inches high, with large oval leaves, and its great peculiarity, the little hollow flowers, hanging from under the long flower-stalk.

Gather the leaves; bruise them thoroughly in a mortar with half a pound of fresh lard; put them into a well-covered earthen jar, and set it in a warm place for five days. Take it out; boil it a little; strain and press it; then add to this liquor another handful of bruised leaves and a little more lard, and let it stand as before. If you want the ointment very strong, you can repeat this process several times. The last time of boiling, add while hot, to every pound of the ointment, two ounces scraped yellow beeswax.

A delightful fresh ointment can be made for cooling inflammations, from violets and their leaves; but I have found these more effectual when gently simmered in milk and used as a poultice, although that seems rather an unpoetic use to make of these lovely blossoms.

Every one must be acquainted with the common *Galium aparine*, that grows in every untrimmed hedge, with its long, weakly, clinging stalks, covered with whorls of green leaves, and so rough that if you pick it, it adheres to your gloves. This plant is known by many aliases—goosegrass, cleavers, bedstraw, &c., and is much prized in country districts for its virtues. The juice is a styptic for arresting bleeding; and the infusion, made with lukewarm water, is a valuable medicine. Its nature is so delicate that it must not be boiled nor subjected to great heat, or the goodness is destroyed. An ointment for removing swellings can be made by simply pounding and crushing the whole plant in a mortar with some cold fresh lard, and then expressing the juice with a little heat applied—just sufficient to melt the lard.

Amongst the plants which possess special virtues, I may name the mallow (*Malva sylvestris*), as being useful in almost every case where hot fomentations are called for. Chamomile for the same purpose is well known.

A favourite plant in many places for medicinal uses, both internal and external, is the pretty hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*). This plant is so useful in many ways, that it should be gathered every spring as it is beginning to flower, carefully dried, and kept for use. One old-world remedy for wounds was made from the green herb, bruised and made into ointment, with a little sugar added; but that I have never tried. It makes an invaluable gargle in quinsy, boiled with figs, and used warm.

Now we must have something sweet to make! and what so delicious as Pot pourri? There are numerous recipes in my old book of herbalists for making this; but I will only give two, which I have proved and found excellent. If placed about a house in large open china bowls, these will keep equally fragrant for two years, if occasionally stirred. None of our preparations depend more than does Pot pourri upon the ingredients being picked at the right time. If the leaves are the least wet, the Pot pourri turns mouldy; and if the rose-leaves are picked in the evening after the heat of the day, the best of their perfume is lost. Therefore, go out early on a fine morning to the garden, and bring in a basketful of freshly opened rose petals, and also from every flower the yellow stamens, as they contain a great deal of the perfume of the flower. Pick an equal quantity of lavender

blossoms, and put them all in a large earthenware bowl; add half a pound crushed orris-root, which can be bought at a chemist's; and then to every two pounds add two ounces of bruised cloves, and the same of cinnamon, allspice, and common salt. Let the whole stand for about a fortnight, turning it over carefully, and thoroughly mixing it every day with your hands, and then it will be ready for use.

A second recipe for Pot pourri, but which I do not like so well for keeping, though it is wonderfully fragrant at first, is made in the same way, but with equal parts of rose-leaves, violets, jessamine, and musk flowers. Naturally, the violets must be picked in the early spring, dried, and then mixed with the other flowers later. To this recipe also add the rind of two Seville oranges cut in slices and stirred amongst it.

If you want a really fragrant plant to lie amongst your clothes, so that they shall smell of new-mown hay and dried violets, come down with me to this deep woodland glade where the tall trees grow, making a dark still shade, mossy banks on either side, with ferns here and there growing in luxuriant beauty. Every old tree-stump in the cool shade bears lovely mosses and graceful fronds of ferns, mostly the *Polypodium vulgare*. One notices, too, the tall stiff spikes of the *Blechnum boreale*, with the low growing carpet of leaves that form the whole plant. Down here, where the wood is thick and the interlacing branches of the trees make pleasant shade in summer, you will find, in the early summer months, a slender delicate plant about a foot high, the leaves in whorls of six up the stalk, and an insignificant little white blossom; but oh, so sweet! This is the *Asperula odorata*, or sweet-scented woodruff, and has always been a favourite with housewives to lie amongst their stores of linen and to keep away moths.

In this slight sketch of herbalist's work, I have only just touched the borders of what is both a useful and an entertaining study; but I will gladly add another paper at a future time.

SWEET GILLIAN.

CHAPTER II.

THERE was only one passenger by the *Comet* coach, which condescended to stop at the little village of Hingleton on its way eastwards from the metropolis, one bright morning a few days after the occurrences related in the last chapter. This was a tall, stoutly-built, young man of five-and-twenty, clad in regimentals, with a corporal's chevron on his coat-sleeves, his face bronzed by foreign suns, and his general appearance bearing that stamp of smartness which is only to be remarked upon men who have seen service, and who have got to regard the habit of smartness as second nature. He seemed anxious to escape observation when the vehicle pulled up at the *Gaskell Arms*, and jumping down on the off-side, turned swiftly down the lane leading to the fields, and not until he was well clear of the houses did he pause to gaze around him. 'It seems

as if I had never left the old place,' he soliloquised, 'although it's six years almost to a day since I went away. There's the old church; and there's the parsonage, and the avenue of elms; and old Polly Grimmer's linen hanging out to dry, as if it had been hanging all this time. And there'—here he turned his face in the direction to which he was steering—'there's the old home. I don't suppose the old gentleman will be particularly glad to see me, for, heaven knows, I did little enough to win his affection. Yet his heart may warm when he sees the red coat, and knows that I've been trying to wipe out the disgrace by fighting my country's battles. So here goes.' Thus saying, he strode onwards towards where, amidst a pleasant stretch of tree-dotted green, a fine old Tudor mansion reared its gray, weather-beaten gables. There was no one about on this fair April morning, so that the young man, as he briskly stepped out on the well-known path, could indulge without interruption in the reveries natural to a man returning after long years of adventure and suffering to an old home. There was a new face at the window of the little lodge cottage, a fact which struck the young man at once with a faint foreboding that changes of one sort or another had taken place; but he walked resolutely in and asked if Squire Gaskell was at home.

'Squire Gaskell!' exclaimed the lodge-keeper, with a look of no great friendship at the young soldier. 'Squire Gaskell's been dead this four years or more.'

The young man turned pale—trees, lodge, distant house, and all seemed to swim before him, and he had to lean for support against the stone gatepost before he could utter a word. 'Squire Gaskell dead!' he murmured. 'Then—then who lives here now?'

'Why, Squire Ramsden sure-ly,' replied the man; 'and I'm thinking he wouldn't be over well pleased to see a soldier prowling about. We've had too many soldiers about since the war was stopped; and there ain't a man hereabouts who owns a chicken what wouldn't be precious glad never to see a red coat again.' So saying, he turned into the cottage and slammed the door after him.

A sickening feeling came over the young soldier as he stood there, irresolute what to do or where to go. Under ordinary circumstances, he would have resented practically the insolence of a menial at the very gate above which were sculptured his own family bearings, and through which in past days he had never gone without respectful salutes and courtesies from all who met him. But the bitter thought came over him that he was an alien—that he had broken his father's heart by his extravagances and wild doings, and that he had been punished for so doing by disinheritance. He turned slowly and sadly up the lane which he remembered as being famous in old times for butterflies and birds' nests, unwilling to tear himself away from a spot endeared to him by a thousand memories of happy child-life, although he felt that he had no further practical interest in it. Clambering up the bank, rich with wild clematis, elder clusters, and bunches of nodding foxglove, when he had got well out of sight of the lodge and

its surly janitor, he peered over the fence for a moment, vaulted lightly on to the other side, and was amidst the fresh, sweet, flower-dappled grass of what he remembered as the Park Meadow. He had eyes simply for the old house away in front of him, externally the same old house he had left, yet sadly, utterly changed to him within the last ten minutes. And here, heedless of all else, of blue skies above, of glad, bright young foliage all around, he threw himself down, and recalled in his mind scenes and incidents associated with every window and every gable of the old house, from the earliest memories of childhood to that last fatal morning when, with angry words and a flushed face, he defied his father, and flung himself out of the house to tempt fortune in the service of his country. Perhaps he had been thus for a quarter of an hour, when he caught sight of a book lying open in the grass not many yards in front of him. He rose and picked it up. Turning naturally to the title-page, he saw that it belonged to John Ramsden. As he listlessly turned over the leaves, he was aware, by a hurried rustling through the grass, that some one was approaching, probably in quest of the forgotten volume; and looking up, he espied a young lady, with rosy cheeks, and an agitated expression on a very pretty face, that belonged to no other than Sweet Gillian. Astonished at the apparition of a red-coated stranger, she uttered a little cry, and seemed uncertain whether to advance or to retreat. Lionel, on his part, conscious that he was a trespasser, although upon his own property, coloured up, and stood with the book in his hand, looking first at the girl and then at the book, as much as to say: 'I expect you've come after this book; but, for the life of me, I don't know how to explain my presence here, or to return you your property gracefully.'

The girl, however, came to his rescue, for, although, from the number of disbanded soldiers then wandering over the kingdom in search of employment which none could give them, the appearance of a red coat in country districts was hailed rather with terror than with enthusiasm, poor Lionel looked so very sheepish and unmartial, that Gillian was assured; so she said: 'I left a book here about an hour ago.'

There was something in the tone of her voice which put the young soldier in turn at his ease, so, handing the book to her, he said: 'I'm very sorry; I believe I am trespassing, but I couldn't help it; and I found this book lying here. It belongs to—'

'To papa—that is, to my father, Squire Ramsden; and, thank you so much, for he is so particular about his books,' interposed Gillian.

'Then I am speaking to Miss Ramsden, I presume,' said the young soldier; 'and I'm glad to be able to explain why I am trespassing.'

'Yes, you certainly are trespassing,' she said, smiling. 'But—I—I don't think you look as if you would do much harm; only, if papa were to see you, he might be very disagreeable, for he can't bear the idea that any one should come on to his property.'

'Perhaps he wouldn't mind so much, if he knew who I was,' said the young man.

'Oh, it wouldn't matter a bit,' said Gillian;

'he turns anybody off, and has given instructions to all the men to do the same. Even the new clergyman got turned off, before papa knew who he was.'

'Well, I haven't much heart to do harm, Miss Ramsden,' said he. 'A man who is revisiting his home after an absence of long years, doesn't, as a rule, feel inclined to do harm; he's too glad to get back.'

'Is Hingleton your home, then?' asked Gillian. He shook his head, and replied: 'I haven't a home now anywhere; but when I had, it was at Hingleton.—No; I'm not giving hints for alms, Miss Ramsden; I've more money than I can possibly find use for.'

Gillian, who had pulled out her purse when Lionel had said that he was homeless, looked at him strangely at this remark.

'I wish you would allow me to ask you a few questions, without considering that I am taking a liberty, Miss Ramsden,' said the young soldier.

'Certainly.'

'Have you lived here very long?' he asked.

'About four years,' replied the girl.

'Squire Gaskell lived here before, did he not?'

'Yes; I believe so; but I really know very little about it. I was at school at the time; but I remember something being said about the house having been in the old family for three hundred years.'

'Then the squire died, I suppose, and there was nobody to succeed him?'

'I believe that was the case.'

'Did you never hear that he had a son?'

'No. We came here very suddenly; and papa never talks to me about business matters. But there is a lawyer here who knows all about it, a Mr Trent; he would give you all information.'

'Edward Trent, by Jove!' muttered the young man; 'the fellow I thrashed at Bonham fair.' He paced up and down for a few seconds in silence, then he stopped short and said: 'Miss Ramsden, I suppose you wouldn't believe me if I tell you that I am Lionel Gaskell, son and heir of the old squire?'

Gillian turned pale, and her eyes rested on the corporal's stripes on the young man's coat. 'You—a soldier, not an officer, the son of the squire whose family owned the Hall for three hundred years! Of course, if you tell me so, I should believe it. But is it not very extraordinary?' she asked.

'It is very extraordinary, perhaps; and it will seem all the more extraordinary to you when I ask you, as a favour, not to say a word about my being here. I have only one proof about me. Do you remember what the coat of arms over the gate over there is?'

'Yes,' replied Gillian; 'there are two boars' heads, then a bar, and a third boar's head underneath, and the motto is *Invicta Veritate*.'

Lionel quietly stripped up his sleeve, and displayed punctured on his arm the arms as described by Gillian, with the initials L. G. beneath.

The girl was evidently much agitated. 'Mr Gaskell,' she said, 'I must ask your pardon for behaving so strangely to you as I have; but

in truth I was rather frightened at first, as there are so many strange characters wandering about now, especially old soldiers; and naturally, perhaps, when I came suddenly upon you as I did'—

'Oh, please don't say a word,' said the young man. 'If you call your ready acceptance of what I have just told you as truth—and remember, Miss Ramsden, my proof is not very much after all—if you call that strange behaviour in the sense of being rude, I should be curious to see you when you are what you would consider amiable.' He was very little in the mood for bandying compliments with any one just then; but the fascinating manner of Gillian, which had won for her the epithet 'Sweet,' had even driven temporarily from his mind the sudden blow he had received in the news of his father's death, and he was drawn towards her by an unaccountable, inexpressible magic.

She, in turn, believed all that he said about himself, for in the course of the conversation which ensued upon the avowal of his identity, he displayed an intimate acquaintance with every nook and corner of the old Hall and its neighbourhood, such as could not have been picked up by an impostor. Moreover, she asked herself what object could he have in falsely passing himself off as the son of the late Squire Gaskell? Most of all, perhaps, she was won over to belief in him by his manner and bearing, which, although he had lived six years in rough company, were eminently those of a gentleman; and although her woman's penetration saw that he admired her, she observed that even after he had declared and proved himself to be Lionel Gaskell, he treated her as the mistress of Hingleton Hall, and in no single speech or gesture seemed to forget that he was a trespasser and interloper.

The sound of mid-day booming from the stable clock warned her that it was time for her to return homewards.

'Miss Ramsden,' said Lionel as he took her proffered hand, 'before we part, I have but two favours to ask of you—one is, that you remember your promise not to say a word about my presence here; the other is, to give me permission to see you again.'

'Consider both favours, if they are favours, as granted, Mr Gaskell.'

The young man pressed her hand; and in a few seconds was wandering slowly back over the fields, his heart full of conflicting emotions, prominent amongst which was admiration for this fair alien, who was mistress of the Hall, which had known no owner but a Gaskell during three hundred years. And yet, alien as she was, he seemed to know the name of Ramsden; he seemed to remember having heard his father speak of 'poor Jack Ramsden;' but of Gillian herself he had never heard. Perhaps she did not belong to the neighbourhood. He resolved, however, to see Edward Trent at the first opportunity, not so much with an idea of finding out if he had been actually disinherited, but to learn about his father's death and about Gillian.

The notion was in his mind, when the man himself came along the path in the direction of the Hall; he did not appear to recognise Lionel, and would have passed on, had not the young

soldier sung out: 'Hillo, Trent! So you've forgotten an old friend!'

The lawyer stopped, looked at Lionel keenly under his black brows, and said: 'I have no friends to forget, and never had; you're making a mistake; good-morning,' and hurried on, in spite of Lionel's declaration of his identity.

'Don't want to see me—that's about it,' thought Lionel, as he resumed his way, not towards the village, but across the fields parallel with it, for he was unwilling to return before dusk.

But Edward Trent had recognised him, and his feelings may be imagined as he knew now, unless he was rapid and sure in the blow he dealt, all that he had plotted and planned and worked for during the past six years would be discounted. Indeed, he had now to re-arrange matters entirely, and instead of turning in to the lodge gate, he walked slowly up the lane, meditating deeply as to how affairs, now thrown out of the channel he had carefully scooped out for them by the sudden re-appearance of Lionel Gaskell, could be readjusted. His resolution was soon taken, and suddenly changing his slow step for a brisk stride, he regained the fields, and looked about for the conspicuous red coat of Lionel. The quick eyes which could be quite blind if occasion required, and which took in every inch of a man's person without apparently looking at it, soon descried the young soldier. Trent coming up with him, greeted him with well-affected heartiness. 'Why, Lionel, old fellow, I am glad to see you! I really didn't recognise you just now; but I immediately afterwards recollected you.'

'Well, Trent,' said Lionel, 'so many sad changes have taken place here, that I was hardly surprised that my old friends shouldn't know me.—So the poor old father's dead, and there are new folk at the Hall, and I almost wish that I hadn't come back to so much misery.—But you're looking thriving, Trent!'

'Yes, I can't complain; it's an ill wind that blows nobody good. The Hall connection is of course a very valuable one for me.'

Lionel could have knocked him down for this speech; but his object in seeing the lawyer would have been defeated by such a summary proceeding; so he said quietly: 'Were you not my father's solicitor at the time of his death?'

'Yes; I succeeded my senior in the firm, old Tom Blennerhasset, whom you remember. It was a painful business.'

'What was?' asked Lionel. 'Remember, you're speaking to a man who has been away for six years, and who knows nothing more of what has happened since his absence than that the poor old father was dead.—What was there painful about it?'

'Why,' said Trent, putting his leg over a stile, leaning his elbow upon it, and looking at the ground, 'the way the poor old gentleman went on about you.'

'Grief or anger?' asked Lionel.

'Anger. Vowed that you'd broken his life and his hopes; and finally added the codicil to his will which cut you adrift from the inheritance.'

'Well,' said Lionel, 'I suppose it was a just punishment.—But tell me, Trent, who are these Ramsdens?'

'Old Ramsden was a sort of cousin of your father's, poor as a church-mouse, and lived in a dingy hole in London. All of a sudden he learned that the Hall and twenty thousand pounds had been left him.'

'Lives here all alone with his daughter then?' said Lionel.

The lawyer gave the young soldier one of his keen penetrating looks at the mention of the word daughter. 'Yes,' he answered. 'Girl's engaged to be married.' Lionel's heart sank, and his face flushed just in time for Trent to see it. The lawyer went on: 'Why, have you seen her?'

'Yes; I met her by accident this morning.—Well, Trent, I've nothing more to say, except that I don't wish my presence here to be known. But, pray tell me, who witnessed the codicil to my father's will?'

The lawyer was a little confused for a second, but immediately recovering himself, he replied: 'Who witnessed the alteration? Why, Colonel Adamthwaite of the Grange, and Simson the steward.'

'Thanks.—Good-bye. We may meet again; but as my interests here are so small, I shall be on the move again soon.'

They shook hands with apparent cordiality, and parted, each occupied with strange thoughts, which took the shape of muttered remarks—Lionel's, to the effect that he believed Trent was a liar and a rascal; Trent, a strong expression of disgust that the young soldier had added to the crime of returning to his native village, that of having seen and spoken to Gillian Ramsden; and, for reasons of his own, a determination to prevent the squire from knowing that Lionel Gaskell had reappeared on the scene.

From motives best known to himself, Lionel Gaskell did not choose to sleep in Hingleton, so he walked the three miles between that place and Bonham, the nearest market town, and having purchased a suit of civilian clothes, settled down at the famous *Cock Inn and Posting-house*, where nobody remembered him, and where his movements were free and unobserved. He had a good deal to think over after this, perhaps the most eventful day of his life; and to facilitate the operation, he lit his pipe after his evening meal, and, attired in his new clothes, sauntered forth into the town. What Trent had told him about Sweet Gillian's engagement was naturally uppermost in his mind. For some reason or other, he did not believe it; for, in the eyes of Lionel, who had had some experience in the ways of the fair sex, she had not the air of a girl who was betrothed; and, strangest evidence of all in the young man's mind, she had granted willingly the favour he had asked her of being allowed to see her again.

Edward Trent's momentary confusion when asked about the added codicil to Squire Gaskell's will, had struck Lionel as remarkable. Of course, it was not impossible that the poor old gentleman, irritated, grieved, and insulted by his son's behaviour, and especially by the disgrace he had brought upon the family by openly enlisting as private in a marching regiment, should have taken such a step; yet Lionel remembered his

father to be a very different man; indeed, the recollection of his patience and forbearance under great provocation added in no small degree to the sting which the young man felt at the news of his death.

The idea suddenly flashed across his mind, what if Edward Trent himself was an aspirant for the hand of Miss Ramsden? He was roused from the train of thought by the sounds of excited voices and the trampling of many feet. Looking in the direction whence the sounds came, he beheld, in the dim light of the oil-lamps, a soldier in uniform, bareheaded, his coat torn and bespattered, dragged along by four officers of the law, and followed by a small crowd, amongst whom were half-a-dozen men who looked like gamekeepers. In answer to his inquiry, a bystander told him that the man was one of a gang of poachers who had long been the terror of the neighbourhood, and who had been taken literally red-handed by Squire Ramsden's watchers.

'And,' added the man, 'he won't get off under two years, if the colonel's on the bench and Lawyer Trent has anything to do with it.'

Encouraged by his informant's respectable manner and appearance, Lionel asked him some questions about Trent, and learned what was then the popular report, that the young lady at Hingleton Hall was going to be made Mrs Trent before long, hence the reason that the lawyer was so active and eager in his persecution of poachers on the Hingleton estate.

With a sad heart, the young man turned in to his inn, resolved, however, that he would be in the Park Meadow early the next morning, and that, if possible, he would learn the truth from Miss Ramsden herself.

WITH THE CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE.

So few people nowadays are without relatives or friends who, crowded out of the fierce race for wealth in this country, are tempting fortune in the colonies, that the following extracts from a letter giving certain incidents in the life of a private in the Canadian mounted police, will doubtless be read with considerable interest, especially by those who have friends in that force. After some remarks on the slowness of promotion and the difficulty of getting a commission, certain of the writer's personal experiences are given.

'And now I will tell you,' he writes, 'a few of my experiences in this country. I joined the force some eighteen months ago, and was immediately forwarded to this post, where I had, as a recruit, to work with the others for two months from nine A.M. to five P.M. building the present barracks. The thermometer all that time registered between forty and fifty degrees below zero. However, with the exception of a few frost-bites, I stood the intense cold very well. Directly we had finished building the barracks, I was forced to go with another man to cook for the troop for a month. You may imagine they did not live very well, for I had never cooked a thing in my life before. At the end of the month, it happened that the sergeant-major required a clerk; and my writing having been seen, I obtained the position,

which I held for four months. I was then ordered to go on the R— Detachment, which consists of three men, of whom, being the senior, I had the charge. Beer or alcoholic liquor of any kind is not allowed in the Territories except by permit from the lieutenant-governor, so our duties consisted chiefly in putting down the illicit liquor traffic, which is carried on to a great extent. I remained on the Detachment for eight or nine months, and during the first six months, made many important arrests.

'The worst time I had was about a month before I left the Detachment, when I received orders to proceed to a place called M— Creek, a distance of three hundred miles. On this trip there were one officer and two men besides myself, escorting the Indian treaty money—ninety thousand dollars, all in one-dollar bills—to be handed to the officer in charge at M— Creek. There are so many "rough" characters in the country, that these expeditions are always attended with great danger. As we almost expected, on the second night of our journey, towards midnight, when we had pitched our tent, posted a man as sentry, and turned in, we were alarmed by a challenge from our sentry. The next moment a shot was fired, and we had only time to get out of our tents, when we were charged by a body of ten mounted men. We had no time to get to our horses, and had to open fire immediately upon the gang. We carry the Winchester repeating rifles, which hold nine cartridges; we also had revolvers, so we managed to pepper them. In less than five minutes, eight of the marauders were out of their saddles; the remaining two made their escape. Our sentry was shot through the thigh at the first onset, and was a long time before he recovered. At the commencement of the fight, I took up a kneeling position near the tent, and never moved until the last man had disappeared. On attempting to rise, I fell; and when the officer came up, I discovered I had been shot in my right leg, about three inches above the ankle. The officer—who was uninjured—set off at daybreak to the nearest spot for assistance, and by mid-day returned with a wagon and some men, who lifted us in, and despatched us on our return journey to R—. I was laid up for three weeks, but got all right again, with the exception of a scar, which will never disappear.

'These skirmishes are so frequent in the force, that this one was not looked upon as anything particular. Beyond being complimented for our behaviour, the matter dropped. When I was able to get about again, I managed to obtain the position in the supply store which I have kept since. I could give you numerous incidents of minor importance that occurred to me during my stay on the Detachment, but I am afraid you will be tired of reading these particulars of my adventures in the north-west.'

In a postscript, the writer adds: 'A terrific storm just ceased here; wind travelled at the rate of sixty-one miles per hour, and temperature thirty degrees below zero. Imagine it, if you can.'

Another passage gives us an idea of the pay, &c., of the Canadian mounted police: 'Should I be fortunate enough to obtain the rank of a quarter-master sergeant, I should be in a comparatively good position, for it would entitle me

to private quarters, use of stoves, coal, and light, clothing and rations all free, together with forty-five dollars per month (about nine pounds), out of which, as a single man, I should certainly be able to save something.'

There is one point in the letter well worthy of notice: By the aid of Winchester repeating rifles—weapons which can be fired nine times without stopping to reload—three men, though taken by surprise, were able to defeat a gang of ruffians ten in number and presumably well armed. The result of the skirmish is certainly strong evidence of the value of the weapon in cases where the enemy is in overpowering numbers, and the fighting quite, or almost, hand to hand.

A BROTHER OF THE MISERICORDIA.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAP. II.

THE day before I was to give up work at the Palazzo, I took with me a coil of rope, wrapped as a parcel, much wondering what Amaranthe would do with it. The incident of the reflected face of her husband haunted me, and determined me to have no hesitation in fulfilling the Princess's request, as I felt that he possessed undoubtedly great capacity for cruel deeds. He came to talk to me in the afternoon, and conversed with his usual urbanity; but with my recollection of what his face *could* be, I wondered I had ever thought him handsome, the eyes were so hard, and the long chin and massive jaw betokened obstinacy; still, when he smiled, or when, as to-day, he spoke of the ennobling effect of religion on art, he looked almost saintly. Standing before a 'Pietà' of Sassoferato's, he said: 'Why have we no painters now who can so bring before us the realities of our faith?'

'Perhaps because we ourselves are faithless,' I answered lightly.

'Ah, no; faith is not dead,' he replied seriously. 'She only slumbers in our hearts, and it needs but little to rouse her to active life.'

Surely this man was a strange compound of good and evil! I wished I had been able to study his character more, and half repented of the coil of rope, the notes, the promise to his wife. As if in answer to my unuttered wish for his acquaintance, he said: 'Will you drive with me to-morrow? I am going to inspect some antique jewels I hear are for sale, and I should like you to see them.'

'Willingly. I shall have finished my work here at four, and shall be quite at your service.'

'At half-past four to-morrow, then,' he said, 'I will call for you at the Palazzo Macchiavelli—that is where you live, I think?'

'Yes,' I answered; but I was a little surprised, for I had only told him I lodged in the Via Santo Spirito, and had not given him the name or number of my residence. I thought a good

deal about the increased friendliness of the Prince, while I was putting the finishing touches to my work, and felt uneasy as to my share in the doings of his wife; but nevertheless I placed the parcel of rope in my box, which of course I did not lock. Leaving little but the varnishing to do to my picture on the morrow, I took my departure.

Once again I strolled to the Cascine, drinking in the gaiety of the scene and watching the gay throng of passers-by; and on my way home, gazing with fresh wonder at the beauty of the Campanile, touched at its top with the lovely hues of sunset, and standing out against the clear sky more like some exquisite building in a dream, than one that has watched the changes of the city below for five hundred years and more. At the *Cafe Rossini*, where I went for dinner, I heard the friendly voice of Savelli calling me to go to his table, and promising to order a proper meal for me, a feat he never considered me capable of performing for myself.

'You are leaving us soon, I hear,' he said. 'How have you succeeded with your picture?'

'Tolerably well; but it was a difficult one to copy, as all Morone's are.'

'Have you made acquaintance with the Princess?' was his next query.

'I have seen her once or twice, when the Prince has brought her to look at my work. How lovely she is! and how like the "Amaranthe." She told me the lady of the portrait was her ancestress; but I understood Prince Gherado to say she was *his*. How is that?'

'The families of Bandinelli and Schidone have intermarried for three centuries, I believe, so the lady may easily be the ancestress of both Prince and Princess,' was his answer. 'They were cousins, I know; but not of course within the degree prohibited by our Church. Their marriage was notorious enough without that!'

'Notorious! How?'

'Why, all Florence knows that the Princess was at the convent of St. Caterina, the garden of which joins that of the Palazzo Schidone. The Bandinelli are poor; and the Princess had many brothers and sisters; she was destined for the cloister. During her probation, however, she became in some manner acquainted with the Prince; and as her father declined to alter his family arrangements and allow her to leave the convent, Gherado took the matter into his own hands, and persuaded her to elope with him.'

'Was there not a great scandal?'

'The cardinal's influence was invoked; by his aid the affair was hushed up and the young people forgiven; but I have heard that not only did the Prince forego any claim to dowry with his wife, but that he has consented to part with some of the treasures brought into the family by former Bandinelli, now to be returned as peace-offerings. Your picture perhaps?'

'Perhaps,' I replied, not liking to say I knew it was so.

'I doubt if the Princess is happy,' pursued Luigi, for whom the subject seemed to possess an interest. 'Gherado comes of a hard and cruel race; and in spite of his piety and his devotion to the poor, there are many tales afloat of his tyranny when thwarted, and he has never been supposed to be a *cavalier des dames*.'

'Does the Princess appear often in society?'

'Very seldom, and *never* without her husband. It has been remarked that she is never out of his sight in the presence of a third person. She must find it dull.'

'Not so dull as the convent, I imagine,' was my reply.

We soon left the dinner-table and sauntered towards the Ponte Vecchio on the way to my rooms, where Savelli wanted to see some of my sketches. As we went by the Via Condotta, a company of the 'Misericordia' were passing along it bearing a covered litter, in which they were taking some poor wretch to the hospital. We waited to let them pass before we crossed the road, and raised our hats as the captain of the company advanced. The figure in the strange black garments, bearing his taper, turned towards me; and with the thrill that is always given by a look from eyes behind the two pierced holes in the brother's mask, came to me the idea that the leader of the band was Gherado Schidone. I mentioned this to my companion.

'Likely enough,' was his careless answer. 'Gherado is one of the fraternity, I know. He never shirks his turn of duty.'

The weird procession went on. It was past nine and an exquisite night. The moon had not long risen, and the tapers of the receding brethren made patches of yellow in the soft moonlight. Savelli and I sat talking far into the night, and I made a sketch of the little scene that had so impressed itself on my mind.

Next morning, I prepared for my last visit to the Palazzo with a slight fluttering of the nerves, and an idea that 'something might happen' before I returned to my rooms. The picture-gallery, however, bore its usual aspect of peace and comfort; a splendid fire lent cheerfulness to the apartment, and everything was as quiet as heretofore. On opening my tin box I found a sign of Amaranthe's presence, not only in the absence of the rope, but also in a square letter sealed with a large coat of arms, and directed to 'His Eminence the Cardinal Bandinelli.' This I put carefully in my pocket-book; and in the afternoon I placed my now finished picture on a dower chest; and with a farewell glance around the room, and specially at the 'Amaranthe,' whose face I had studied so long, I summoned the attendant to carry my impedimenta, and jumped into the carriage he called for me.

At the appointed time the Prince's little English groom called for me at my lodgings and informed me that his master awaited me; and I descended to the street. Here I found a little low carriage drawn by a pair of ponies; and during our somewhat long drive, I admired the way in which Gherado guided the spirited little animals through the crowded streets, till, after passing down the Lung' Arno and crossing the river by the Ponte alle Grazie, we skirted the Duomo, then turned in the direction of S. Maria Novella, and finally, in a small

street leading out of the Via del Giglio, paused in front of a large Palazzo, where we halted.

After being conducted through the usual dreary saloons and galleries, we came to the room in which were the antiques for sale; and they were shown us by their owner. I did not think much of the display, and found very few things I could advise the Prince to purchase. It seemed to me that he must have been misinformed as to the value of the collection. He expressed no disappointment, however, chose one or two bits of inlaid jewellery, and we prepared to leave. I had noticed a lovely chased cup by Benvenuto Cellini, and recommended the Prince to buy it; but he refused, and as we were on our way to his carriage, he explained that he did not believe it to have been worked by Cellini, but copied by one of his pupils; and he added: 'The original, I claim to possess; and if you can spare the time, I should like to show it you. Will you return with me?'

I gladly acquiesced; and we were speedily driving into the courtyard of the Palazzo Schidone. The Prince ran lightly up the broad staircase, and entering the library in which I had first seen him, led me through it to a small but exquisitely furnished apartment, where he said he kept his few treasures. Here I spent, I think, the most enjoyable hour I had passed in Florence. The collection was small; but the tazzi, intaglios, cameos, and enamels were perfect of their kind, and to each a tale of interest was attached. I was fascinated by the charm of Gherardo's manner, as he directed my attention to them and told their histories. At length he brought me the Cellini vase: it was a cup shaped like a nautilus-shell, of exquisitely chased gold. On the rounded portion of the back was a winged Mercury poised on a ball of onyx. In the one we had previously seen, the figure was placed on a silver globe, which spoilt the effect, and it was, besides, of far inferior finish. The Prince asked me if I would like to make a sketch of the vase, as I was so much impressed by its beauty; and I took out my little pocket-book for the purpose. The Prince gave me a cigar, rang for some coffee, and while returning his treasures to their various stands and cabinets, also began to smoke. The servant entered with the coffee, which he placed on a table behind me, and retired. My companion rose to replace in a jewel-case a ring left out, while I went on with my sketch. Presently he handed me my coffee, and drinking some himself, sat down and continued his delightful talk, to which I listened eagerly. The delicious coffee was in a cup of rather larger size than those in which the beverage is usually served. I was tired, and sipped it gladly.

Gradually I found a curious sensation stealing over me. I was strangely unable to go on with my sketch, and dropping the pencil, listened to the Prince. I felt contented, satisfied—but stilled. My head fell gently back against the cushioned chair, and languidly I watched the Prince. His talk appeared to grow more rapid, then he paused. Presently he laughed—a low wicked laugh, and his face assumed the evil expression I remembered so well; but I was incapable of the smallest effort. Suddenly he rose from his chair, leaned over me, and hissed in my ear:

'Fool! I know all! Death is thy doom!' Then he crossed the room, pushing the furniture out of his way, rang a bell violently, and came back to my side. When the servants rushed in, he cried: 'See, Giovanni; the Signor is ill—dying, I fear. He just now put his hand to his heart, sprang from his chair, and fell back like this! Go instantly and fetch il Dottore Monte. —Meanwhile, you bring me a cordial, water, a fan,' he continued, turning to another servant; and then to his valet: 'Unfasten his collar.'

While the terrified footmen were hurrying hither and thither, I still had consciousness enough left to feel that I was now in the hands of a remorseless foe, who meant that I should die. Still I seemed not specially distressed or grieved, but more as if I were outside my body as a spectator. Slowly even this recognition of outward things failed me; and while Gherardo and the valet were trying to unfasten my tie and placing cordial on my lips, their faces and voices receded, and became fainter and dimmer, till all things faded from my consciousness, and I remembered no more.

COMPRESSED AIR.

THE employment of compressed air in sinking foundations has considerably extended of late years, and has been accompanied by a corresponding advance in the construction and manipulation both of pneumatic appliances and pneumatic apparatus. The sensations experienced on first entering a chamber charged with compressed air, and the impressions, both mental and physical, produced by such novel conditions, deserve some passing notice.

A rough sketch of the end in view and the means employed in its attainment will be readily followed. Over the site of the proposed structure—harbour-wall, bridge-pier, or light-house—which has to be founded beneath the surface of the water, a 'caisson' is floated out and sunk. Constructed indifferently of wood or iron, and varying in shape and size with the requirements of the work in execution, it is not easy to define with accuracy what is meant by a 'caisson.' Suffice it, therefore, to fall back on the literal translation from the French, 'a box or coffer;' adding, that the floor is placed several feet above the bottom, and divides the structure into an upper and lower compartment. The latter, filled with air, pumped in by machinery, forms nothing less than a large diving-bell. In this chamber, the workmen are employed, excavating the material beneath their feet; the caisson gradually sinking by its own weight into the hollow excavated beneath it. A sufficiently firm bottom having been reached, nothing remains to be done save to fill the air-chamber with masonry, the men building their way upwards till high-water level is reached, when the works can proceed as if they were on dry land. The caisson is sometimes left in position, forming part of the permanent structure; at other times it is removed.

Ingress and egress to the air-chamber are obtained by means of an air-lock, which prevents the escape of the air, and is similar in its mode of action to that on a canal. The air-lock entered

and the door closed, communication with the outer air is cut off. A valve is now opened, admitting compressed air from the chamber below, which rapidly fills the air-lock. This enables the door leading into the shaft to be opened. The visitor can now descend to the air-chamber, where the task of excavation is being carried on.

On the admission of the compressed air to the air-lock, the visitor will experience a sharp sensation of pain in the ears, which will continue to increase with the pressure. He must at once, swallowing the air, force it into the nostrils, which should be closed by the hand. This will drive the air into the ears, and afford considerable relief, due to the equalisation of pressure on both sides of the drums. This should be repeated as the pressure increases, and until the peculiar sensation of oppression in the ears has abated. If the pain increases, the visitor should leave the air-lock, rather than expose himself to the pain and risk to which he is unsuited; for one of the most marked characteristics of compressed air is the immunity enjoyed by some persons inhaling it, as compared with the inconvenience it causes to others.

One or two curious effects resulting from a denser atmosphere may now be noted. On one occasion, a visitor to the air-chamber of a caisson, anxious to compensate for any loss of tissue occasioned by his exertions, opened and emptied his flask, carefully screwing on the stopper. On coming to the surface, he came again under ordinary atmospheric conditions, and the flask at once exploded, owing to the removal of the outside pressure. Whistling can be performed only with difficulty in compressed air; whilst effervescing wines, as champagne, though they are as palatable as ever, open flat and insipid.

PROTECTION AGAINST CHOKE-DAMP.

After a colliery explosion at Unsworth in March last, Mr C. S. Lindsay showed great endurance and heroism in endeavouring to save the lives of two fellow-explorers who were overcome by choke-damp. Mr Lindsay is said to have carried iron nails in his mouth, which he sucked, and was thus enabled to resist the effects of the choke-damp longer than his companions. The explanation given was, that the carbonic acid gas coming into contact with oxide of iron, formed insoluble carbonate of iron, and so was rendered innocuous. F. R. S., writing to the *Times* with reference to this explosion, says that the quantity of carbonic acid absorbed by the adoption of this plan is inappreciable, as might indeed be expected, and suggests a respirator filled with cotton-wool and slaked lime or caustic soda, to absorb the carbonic acid gas or choke-damp; 'or, better still, a cylinder filled with the same material, carried on the back, with a flexible breathing tube and mouthpiece, will enable an explorer to remain for some time in an atmosphere charged with choke-damp which would be at once fatal if inspired directly.' The foregoing is precisely on the principle of the Fleuss apparatus, by means of which divers can remain below for hours and move about freely; or by which firemen can penetrate dense smoke with impunity.

SISTERLY SYMPATHY.

WHAT shall I say to soothe thee, sister mine,
Now that stern Death has robbed thy little nest
Of the sweet bird, whose every song was thine,
Whose downy wings thy loving bosom prest?
How shall I soothe thee, now those wings are crushed,
Now that the pleasant, twittering voice is hushed?

Lift the stray locks from off the dear, dead face;
Let the bright wavelets with their mates unite;
These lovely snowdrops in her fingers place,
Like to her dimpled bosom, pure and white;
Deck well the casket round our rare white pearl,
Our sweet, sweet Margaret, our baby girl.

Weep not so bitterly, O sister dear;
Cling not so blindly to that wee dead hand;
Think of it, worn and cramped with toiling here,
Smeared, like the shells beneath the ocean sand.
Think, had she lived, Care would have lined that
brow;
Those eyes would weep, as thine are weeping now.

Not as in troubled sleep our darling lies;
No cruel dreams disturb her calm repose.
The blue-veined lids that veil her peaceful eyes,
'Neath thy fond kiss may never more unclose;
Nor shall the lisping accents plead in vain
To her that may not ease the racking pain.

Dear, let this thought alone console thy heart—
Such grief as thine, thy child shall never know.
Think, how the tears unto thine eyes would start,
As moved the feverish fingers to and fro,
Lovingly creeping 'neath the kerchief, where
They burned the breast that loved to feel them there.

We almost trace upon the cottage floor
The faint impressions of her pretty feet;
Young voices wander through the open door;
Some are discordant; some are low and sweet;
And some are like the voice we cannot hear,
Only not half so sweet—not half so dear.

The crumpled pillow where her fair head lay
Like sunbeam glinting on a seagull's wings,
Thy hand shall fondle when the gloaming gray
On thy bowed head its tender shadow flings;
Her pillow oft thy loving lips shall seek,
Because it nestled 'neath her soft, round cheek.

Let the blue ribbons that she wore the last
In loops, coquettish, on her shoulders tied,
With other relics of the hallowed past,
Be neatly folded, kissed, and laid aside.
Look, they are tangled! Shall we loose them? No!
Tangled *she* left them—we will leave them so.

The daisy meek shall fold its crimson tips
In modest beauty on her humble grave,
Pouting for kisses, like her smiling lips!
Lifting its bonny head, as if to brave
The scorn of sculptured tombs, that seem to lower
On the poor earth where blooms the simple flower.

Her soul, dear sister—as the captive bird
Longs for the sunshine, panteth to be free—
Yearned for such music as *we* never heard,
Dreamed of such beauty as *we* never saw.
Mourn we that she has broken her prison bars,
Knowing that, free, she soars beyond the stars?

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